

## KAIZEN HELPS GET INNOVATIVE HEALTHY SUPPLEMENTS TO MARKET FASTER

**ABOUT UCKELE HEALTH AND NUTRITION INC.** For more than 50 years, Uckele Health & Nutrition has assisted in formulating and manufacturing quality dietary products and supplements for people, dogs and horses. Located in Blissfield, MI, Uckele Health & Nutrition is a family-owned business with 160 employees. Their expert team consists of certified nutritionists, chemists, quality experts and product development specialists.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Uckele was in a bind with a majority customer. Due to long lead times and missed delivery dates on newly-developed products, the customer communicated an interest in dual sourcing their product. To attract another supplier, they would re-source a large portion of the product currently being supplied by Uckele. To retain their loyalty and avoid losing future business, the management team at Uckele needed to improve their performance and create a better relationship with their majority customer.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (The Center) assisted Uckele by leading a cross-functional Kaizen involving both them and their majority customer. The goal was to identify and eliminate delays, defects and non-value-added steps in the product launch process. The experts at The Center drew up a plan for a Product Launch Kaizen, which aimed to bring products to market faster to drive sales and bottom-line profit for both Uckele and their customers. By mapping out existing process steps, which previously took 138 days to complete, The Center was able to identify areas with opportunity for reduction in time and steps involved. This allowed for a reduction in product launch time of nearly 30%, getting down to only 89 days. Through this Kaizen, several improvements were made to their product launch process, including the following: the Product Development Process was reduced from 138 business days down to 89; cloud-based project tracking was implemented, allowing integrated manufacturing; a standard online document for communicating new product information was created to reduce incorrect/missing data rate from 50% to 10%; reduction of SKUs and implementation of Kaizen eliminated 10 business days from the label-design process; use of a single system (Formulator) was established to reduce the transfer of data and opportunity for errors; and Standard Work practices were put in place to identify and communicate long lead time components, so team members of all companies involved can plan accordingly.

"The Kaizen was a great success and it will benefit our company and our customers now and into the future. The Center did an outstanding job leading the process. I look forward to future continuous improvement projects."

-Michael Uckele, President

## RESULTS



**\$1.7M** in retained sales



**\$37,000** (increase of 25%) in increased sales



**5** retained employees



**\$14,000** investment in cloud-based software

## CONTACT US



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